

## **Attachment C: Summary of Feedback**

- 1- Summary of Customer Survey Results
- 2- Summary of Jan. 16 Public Meeting
- 3- Landmarks Board Minutes from Jan. 16 meeting
- 4- Responses to Online Questionnaire Following Jan. 16 Public Meeting

## Customer Survey

A customer survey was mailed to 448 individuals that had applied for a landmark alteration certificate, landmark designation, or demolition review in the last year. Surveys were also sent to applicants who had applied for Historic Preservation Tax Credits in the last five years.

A total of 91 completed surveys were received for a response rate of 21%. The majority of respondents (64%) were property owners, and most had applied through the landmark alteration process or the demolition review process. The survey asked respondents to provide feedback on their experience with the Historic Preservation Program and provide suggestions for changes that might improve the program.

In responding to their experience with the review process:

- A majority found the review process was completed in a timely manner and were generally satisfied with the outcome.
- Concerns were expressed about the clarity and ease in navigating the review processes. In particular, comments indicated that the processes were often hard to understand and that staff and the Landmarks Board should do a better job of providing clear and accessible information.

Respondents indicated that the most effective aspects of the current review processes are:

- That there is a program in place to preserve the city's historic resources;
- The ability to meet with staff and interact with the board;
- That the process is reasonable;
- The weekly Landmarks design review committee (Ldrc) meetings are a helpful part of the process.

Suggestions for changes to improve the review processes centered on the following themes:

- Clarify and streamline the review process.
- Create a more consistent structure for reviews.
- The Ldrc and Landmarks Board should allow greater flexibility for different issues.
- Create a more collaborative review process with more understanding of the owners' point-of-view.
- Provide for adequate training of Landmarks Board members to ensure the highest quality of reviews.

Suggestions for incentives to encourage the preservation of Boulder's historic resources included:

- A grant program should be established to encourage rehabilitation and restoration projects;
- Existing incentives should be advertised more broadly;
- Eligibility requirements for incentives should be expanded;
- Green points should be granted for energy efficient remodels of historic properties.

Suggestions to better provide education and outreach for historic preservation issues included:

- The city should host annual or semi-annual meetings to educate property owners;
- Design guidelines should be sent to new owners in historic districts and of landmarked properties;
- Accessibility and ease-of-use of the Historic Preservation Program website should be improved;
- Realtors should be educated on existing regulations and review processes.

# Historic Preservation Plan Public Meeting

Wednesday, January 16, 2013

6:00 – 7:15 p.m.

Municipal Building Lobby, 1777 Broadway

Attendees: 31 members of the public, 4 Landmarks Board members and 8 staff members.

## Purpose

The purpose of this meeting was to introduce the project and gather input on the current historic preservation program and to develop the goals and objectives for the plan. The meeting began with a presentation by Historic Preservation Planner James Hewat who explained the purpose of the project and the anticipated timeframe. Consultant Mary Therese Anstey, principal of HistoryMatters, LLC, provided an overview of her work to date, followed by a short question and answer session.

The group then broke into small discussion groups, each facilitated by a staff member and guided by two questions. The first question was focused on the current program and the second was intended to gather input of what the future of the program should be. Landmarks Board members were present to observe, and met immediately after to discuss the same framework questions.

Following the small discussions, the key points were reported to the larger group. The meeting ended around 7:15 p.m. and approximately 10 members of the public stayed for the Landmarks Board discussion.

## 1) What comments do you have on the Historic Preservation program? What key issues should the plan address?

- Public perception of the Historic Preservation program/Landmarks Board discourages people from designating their homes or undertaking projects that require design review.
- Program as a whole is of value to the community.
- Public outreach and education is lacking – the program should be more proactive.
- Design Review can be frustrating due to inconsistency of decisions and a lack of clarity about what is required.
- Incentives should be advertised.
- A project-by-project approach is not comprehensive- the broader impact should be considered.

## 2) What should historic preservation in Boulder look like in the future? What should the main goals and objectives of the historic preservation program be?

- Demolition process should be revisited
- Education and outreach should be a top priority.
- The value of historic preservation should be promoted (i.e. sustainability and community character).
- Partner with organizations to promote historic preservation in Boulder.
- Highlight the positive work that is done – saves and successes.
- The program should have a broader focus, rather than a project-by-project review.
- Design review should be less restrictive at the rear of a property; focus on mass and scale.
- Design guidelines should provide more flexibility regarding windows, new materials, and sustainability concerns.
- Conservation Districts should be considered to provide an “in between” designation that would preserve the mass, scale and character of a neighborhood without regulation on details such as windows and materials.

**CITY OF BOULDER  
LANDMARKS BOARD  
January 16, 2013  
1777 Broadway, W. 1777 Conference Room  
7:30 p.m.**

The following are the summary minutes of the January 16, 2013 City of Boulder Landmarks Board meeting. A digital recording and a permanent set of these minutes (maintained for a period of seven years) are retained in Central Records (telephone: 303-441-3043). You may also listen to the recording on-line at: [www.boulderplandevlop.net](http://www.boulderplandevlop.net).

**BOARD MEMBERS:**

Mark Gerwing, Chair  
Kurt Nordback  
Kirsten Snobeck  
John Spitzer

**BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:**

Liz Payton

**STAFF MEMBERS:**

Debra Kalish, Assistant City Attorney  
Lesli Ellis, Comprehensive Planning Manager  
James Hewat, Senior Historic Preservation Planner  
Marcy Cameron, Historic Preservation Planner  
Juliet Bonnell, Administrative Specialist

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

The roll having been called, Chair **M. Gerwing** declared a quorum at 7:33 p.m. and the following business was conducted.

**2. DISCUSSION ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF A HISTORIC PRESERVATION PLAN, INCLUDING COMMENTS ON THE CURRENT PROGRAM AND DISCUSSION OF GOALS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE PLAN.**

**What comments do you have about the Historic Preservation program? What key issues should the plan address?**

**Survey**

- Existing surveys are outdated.
- Modernism survey is inadequate and should be expanded through a resurvey.
- Consider a thematic survey (e.g. Boulder's agricultural past).
- Resurvey older properties, either by choosing the first area surveyed in Boulder and working up to the most recent, or identifying areas that have experienced the most development (e.g. Newlands) for resurvey.
- Consultant Mary Therese Anstey added that resurveying a property every ten years is considered the best practice, but that this is becoming increasingly costly.

- J. Spitzer commented that in comparison to other cities, Boulder has completed an impressive number of surveys and perhaps resources should be focused elsewhere.
- The board requested information on the cost and resources involved in a resurvey project to inform a resurvey plan.

### **Incentives**

- 0% interest loans offered by other cities would help promote the preservation of historic buildings.
- Landmarks Design Review Committee (Ldrc) meetings could be used as an opportunity for education about incentives.
- Historic Preservation awards program should be broadened to include successful smaller projects, such as porches or dormers.
- More exemptions and/or variances with respect to the zoning code should be provided.
- Consider allowing a lot to be subdivided for properties with a small house on a large lot as the demolition of smaller resources is often driven by land values (e.g. agricultural resources).

### **Certified Local Government**

- New board members should be educated about the CLG program.
- Explore CLG resources that the city may not be taking advantage of.

### **Public Outreach**

- There was consensus among the board that public outreach and education is a top priority and the board noted that this aspect of the program dominated the public meeting's small group discussions.
- A Landmarks Board Subcommittee was formed last year, but they are unsure about how to be most effective.
- Consider expansion of the awards program for small projects.
- Tap into outside resources that are better at outreach.
- Dedicate staff time and resources to outreach and education.
- Increase outreach efforts by polling citizens regarding their preferred form of education (brochures, lectures, electronic media, etc.).
- Consider development of a smartphone application based walking tour, such as the one developed by Historic Denver, Inc.
- Explain the design review and demolition processes more clearly.

### **Landmark and Historic District Designation**

- The board acknowledged that a new district has not been formed in a number of years.
- Property owners seem to be concerned about the character of the neighborhood, but not to the point of supporting historic district designation (and district designation has typically been community-driven). Public perception is negative due to a sense of loss of private control of designated properties.
- Support for conservation districts (program with more teeth than the Structures of Merit program, but less heavy-handed than designated districts) with guidelines regarding the form, mass and character of the area.
- Consider a thematic conservation district, such as a non-contiguous district of bungalow-styled houses or houses designed by a single architect, such as Charles Haertling.
- In order to gain support for a thematic conservation district, the board may need to take a different, more proactive approach.

### **Design Review**

- Design review is a strength of the current program.
- New board members should be more thoroughly educated on the process.
- Consider simplifying the design review application.

- Consider allowing projects to be reviewed conceptually, in a more collaborative process, by the Ldrc.
- The issue of projects being prejudged at the Ldrc is legally sensitive and has caused the design review process to become more formal in recent years.
- Outreach efforts could be improved by inviting applicants to submit their project in the conceptual stages, allowing applicants to save money on the creation of plans for a project that may not be feasible.
- Clarify to applicants that lack of Ldrc approval is not a denial. In some cases, applicants who do not receive approval through Ldrc review chose not to continue with the project. It would be beneficial for the planning department to tally cases where this occurs.

### **Structures of Merit**

- The idea of the program is good, but the board is unsure how it should be used, since it is only honorary and does not have any “teeth” to provide historic preservation protection.
- The positive purpose of the program is to honor properties that are not yet 50 years old and resources that have not yet come in for review.
- Consider expanding the program to include recognition of smaller projects, e.g. mail recognition letters and certificates to applicants each year.
- Consider creating a ‘District of Merit,’ such as Whittier, where homeowner support might be stronger for an honorary district than a historic district.

### **Demolition Review**

- Proposed change to the demolition ordinance is currently being heard by council. The change would exempt portions of a building that are less than 50 years old from review. If the change is adopted by council, it is important to inform the public.
- Reconsider staff-level review for buildings constructed after 1940.
- The board expressed frustration over the “all or nothing” aspect of demolition review. The board may only consider the current condition of a building and not the changes being proposed.
- Consider additional changes to the demolition ordinance that would address the “all or nothing” issue and improve the ordinance.
- The board is interested in how other communities conduct demolition review and if partial demolition is allowed.

### **What should historic preservation in Boulder look like in the future? What should the main goals and objectives of the historic preservation program be?**

- The plan needs to anticipate issues of sustainability, growth, density and the threat of a major flood.
- The public perception of the Landmarks Board needs to be improved (if the public perception is not improved, the program will lose credibility and possibly be a detriment to resources from the 1960’s, which have not yet come in for review).
- Outreach and education efforts should be increased
- The board should be a resource in adapting historic homes for the future
- The Ldrc should be opened to more people for customer-friendly conceptual reviews

### **3. MATTERS FROM THE LANDMARKS BOARD, PLANNING DEPARTMENT AND CITY ATTORNEY**

### **4. DEBRIEF MEETING/CALENDAR CHECK**

### **5. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 8:51 p.m.

## **Historic Preservation Plan Online Questionnaire #1**

The following questionnaire was posted on the Historic Preservation Plan website following the Jan. 16, 2013 public meeting and was available until January 23, 2013. The purpose of the questionnaire was to gather feedback regarding the current program and input on the goals and objectives of the plan.

The online questionnaire received seven responses, which are included below.

**What comments, if any, do you have about the following aspects of the current historic preservation program?**

### **1. Landmark and Historic District Designation**

- Historic District Designation should only be pursued when a super majority of the affected property owners agree through a one-vote per property.
- You should be exploring reducing the size of districts, not expanding or adding new ones. You should create explicit buffer zones for larger districts that (after they are made smaller) treat homes on the edges in a much more relaxed way. Most importantly, we do not need some grandiose "fundamentals" document, we need a serious re-examination of how the current process is implemented. It is broken and must be fixed!
- The ability to do this is a true blessing. It increases property values and makes Boulder an interesting place to live and visit. These aspects should be explained more clearly to homeowners.

### **2. Design Review**

- This process is much too strict and too much at the whim and taste of the Design Review Committee. Many people have had their plans altered to such a point that they didn't even like the finished product themselves, and many people quit in frustration during the process.
- Should be as limited as possible.
- The review process is fundamentally unfair to applicants, especially within inconsistent, biased and arbitrary DRC meetings.
- Mark Gerwing's desire to see the LDRC as a positive, proactive collaborator in early planning is somewhat dependent on having the right Landmarks Board members and staff. There is a tremendous opportunity to make Mark's vision a reality with the two openings coming up on the LB.
- This can be a helpful process for those that are interested in historic preservation. Unfortunately, it does not seem to help architects or homeowners who are skeptical appreciate the good that they could do by incorporating historic preservation goals into their plans. In particular, it does not seem to impart to architects that they could build more imaginative buildings that fit better into Boulder at no extra cost.

### **3. Structures of Merit Program**

- No structure should be designated as historic unless the property owner is in support of it.

- Not a bad thing, but the truth of the matter is that it only takes one short-term homeowner a year or two to destroy an historic house before moving on to the next flip.

#### **4. Demolition Review**

- Lack of functionality of the property improvements should be a major guideline to allow demolition. The age of the structure should not be the determining factor.
- Must be completely revised.

#### **5. Architectural Surveys**

- Boulder already has a representative collection of historic buildings covering architectural styles. Architectural surveys have already been done and the city should not spend more money on these types of surveys just because there is a new group of buildings reaching 50 years old.
- Should be limited to truly "old" homes/neighborhoods and to homes that actually have some innate quality. It's a waste of our tax dollars to apply landmark designation to post world war 2 homes, especially those built with poor quality, environmentally unsustainable materials. You really must let go of the flawed idea that these tract homes have any historical value. This is utter folly and we do not understand or agree with your belief that these represent valuable history!
- Definitely a good idea to keep track of what we have.

#### **6. Incentives for Property Owners to Encourage Rehabilitation Projects**

- These should be energy efficiency oriented. Rehabilitation to an era should be at the discretion of the property owner.
- A very good thing! One problem is that some incentives are first-come-first-serve, which allows incentives to be gobbled up by a few big projects.

#### **7. Status as a Certified Local Government**

- No comment.
- Not sure what this means.

#### **8. Public Outreach and Education**

- Encourage awareness of historic periods without placing restrictions on properties.
- In general, you have failed at this. However, I'll grant you that allowing us to comment via this survey and to participate in your current effort at evaluating the program is a positive step.
- Interpretation is helpful - draws people in, builds a sense of connection. Tell the story where people are standing, walking or gathering. Do more all over town! Chautauqua does a good job with signage and self guided phone tour.

#### **9. Sustainability**

- Allow the city to evolve by allowing older, inefficient homes to be remodeled to the wishes of the property owner.
- This has far greater value to this community than novel or expanded historic preservation.
- Sustainability by rehabilitation should be an important part of getting green points and the like.

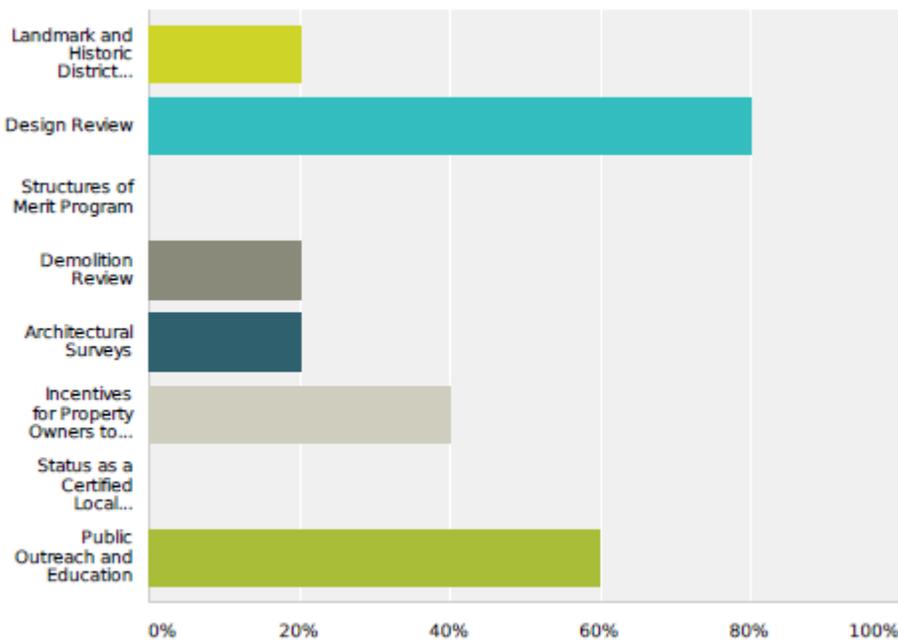
#### **10. Additional Comments**

- The historic preservation plan **MUST** place more priority on environmental concerns and on streamlining the process. This means letting go of some of the historic standards that have been so important. The balance is skewed way too far towards historic accuracy and not enough towards what will make the planet sustainable for all of us. The process to replace windows, for example, is absurd - the paperwork, the stipulations, and the denials for requests to use basic

things like modern, energy-efficient windows. The review process has such a bad reputation that neighbors, contractors, and even City Council members advise people to do projects on the sly without permitting. This indicates a widespread disrespect of the official process. Please, please, please recognize that with climate change and our overburdened planet, we can't afford to make historic preservation the only guiding principle, with a few concessions to energy efficiency. Energy efficiency has got to be equal to historic preservation, if not the top priority.

- Historic designation in Boulder should remain an issue of choice. The city should not expand the control of the departments dealing with historic designation beyond what already exists.
- In many documents, meetings, presentations, etc. you continue to fail to recognize the disdain with which you treat people who live in historic neighborhoods or homes... but you betray yourself with your language. The properties of historic neighborhoods are NOT "RESOURCES". They are people's HOMES, where lives and dreams unfold, where the day to day struggles and joys of life happen. We simply do not see our homes as resources for you to archive in your museum. You must seriously back off in the level of detail at which you micromanage applications. Essentially, your work in this community is done. There is little left for you to preserve. Why do you think the residents of Whittier keep denying your quest to turn their neighborhood and homes into a museum?! They see how the process has failed in the other large district in town (Mapleton) and want absolutely no part of it!
- Cultural history ("the stories") vs. physical history ("the places") - The word "preservation" usually connotes physical places while "history" usually connotes people and events. It appears that there is a desire to bridge the two, but the City's role is about places. The Boulder History Museum and, to a limited extent, Historic Boulder Inc. tend to the people and events. Is that a good division of labor?

II. Please select the key issues that the historic preservation plan should address in order to improve the current program.



Answer Choices	Responses	
Landmark and Historic District Designation	20%	1
Design Review	80%	4

Structures of Merit Program	0%	0
Demolition Review	20%	1
Architectural Surveys	20%	1
Incentives for Property Owners	40%	2
Status as a Certified Local Government	0%	0
Public Outreach and Education	60%	3
Total Respondents: 5		

**12.** In the last ten years, Boulder has: designated 163 individual landmarks and two historic districts; adopted design guidelines to address sustainability issues; completed a survey of Post-WWII residential resources; and made significant changes to the ordinance regarding the designation, demolition review, and historic district processes to allow for more community input and clarity. **Ten years from now, what should be the main goals and objectives of the Historic Preservation program?**

**What is your idea of a successful program?**

- Maintain appreciation of what has already been designated and do not expand the program.
- Smaller. Simpler. Less micromanaged. Run by staff and board members that are less aloof and more connected to the reality of people trying to live in these neighborhoods. In fact, all members of the board and staff should be required to live in a district and to have actually submitted a project for review by Landmarks.
- The Historic Preservation program has operated essentially separately from other City programs. While this approach keeps the program focused, tensions arise with other City goals and programs. The Historic Preservation program should adjust its design review process and guidelines considering overall City goals, sub-district characteristics, and other city activities such as business districts and pay to park.
- Better education that helps people to see that one new ugly building diminishes all that is around it, and ultimately, a number of these kill the heart of the city. Better education on the lower costs of historic preservation. A system that gets new project designs to be compatible with City guidelines before they come before boards and council, perhaps through a system of incentives.

**13. Do you have any other comments that you wish to share?**

- Environmental concerns should take precedence over design issues, e.g., replacing windows.
- Historic designation that is forced on a community or an individual property owner is counterproductive to the residents of the city.
- Please institute a competency requirement. Staff/Board must know the HPC and the guidelines like the back of their hand. They must pass objective and independent tests at least every year. FYI, the City of Boulder did not initiate but did endorse formally the designation of the Colorado Chautauqua as a National Historic Landmark district, which occurred in 2006. This is the only NHL in Boulder County, and one of only 22 NHLs in the state. It is a great opportunity to introduce newcomers to preservation in action as well as sustainability and to deepen connections to place and cultural history.